

MEETING SUMMARY
FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FMAC) MEETING
Michigan United Conservation Clubs of Michigan
2101 Wood Street, Lansing
October 8, 2008
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

FMAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Ms. Lynne Boyd, Chair, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Ms. Amy Spray, Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC)
Mr. Marvin Roberson, Sierra Club
Mr. Stephen Shine, Department of Agriculture
Mr. Bill Botti, Michigan Forest Association
Mr. Desmond Jones, Michigan Tree Farm System
Mr. Warren Schuvosky, Suchovsky Logging
Mr. Thomas Barnes, Michigan Association of Timberman
Dr. Daniel Keathley, Michigan State University
Dr. Donna LaCourt, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, representing Ms. Susan Holben (via conference call)
Mr. Thomas Dunn, Michigan Motorcycle Association
Mr. George Berghorn, Michigan Forest Products Council

FMAC ADVISORS PRESENT

Mr. Barry Paulson, United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service,
Huron-Manistee

FMAC MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. William Manson, Jr., Michigan Snowmobile Association
Dr. Margaret Gale, Michigan Tech
Ms. Rachel Kuntzsch, Heart of the Lakes
Mr. Frank Wheatlake, Natural Resources Commission
Mr. Frank Ruswick, Department of Environmental Quality
Mr. Joel Blohm, Great Northern Lumber of Michigan

FMAC ADVISORS ABSENT

Mr. Thomas Ward, USDA, NRCS

PUBLIC ATTENDEES/GUESTS

Mr. and Mrs. Bob McReavy, Roscommon

WELCOME

Chair Boyd called the meeting of the Forest Management Advisory Committee (FMAC) to order at 1:05 p.m. She welcomed all in attendance and introduced Ms. Cara Boucher as acting State Forester.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Chair Boyd asked for additions or comments; there were none

MOTION: **Mr. Schuvosky** moved to adopt the October 8, 2008 FMAC meeting agenda; supported by **Mr. Barnes**.
Motion to adopt the Agenda as presented passed unanimously

ADOPTION OF MEETING SUMMARY / August 13, 2008

Chair Boyd asked for comments; there were none

MOTION: **Mr. Botti** moved to adopt the August 13, 2008 FMAC Meeting Summary;
 supported by **Mr. Barnes**.
 Motion to adopt the August 13, 2008 Meeting Summary passed unanimously

PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

Chair Boyd stated that last April **Mr. Roberson** asked for 'process improvements' to be a routine part of each meeting. In February, navigating the DNR website was discussed and has since been worked on. **Mr. Roberson** commented the website is easier than in the past; **Chair Boyd** responded the DNR will continue to work on the site being more user-friendly.

Mr. Roberson suggested land owner notices for compartment reviews be sent out earlier. **Chair Boyd** commented that she had attended the Roscommon open house three weeks ago, and only one public member was present. She reported hundreds of notices had been sent. The DNR is still working on ways to get more public participation. **Chair Boyd** reported the planning process is two years out but the DNR doesn't get a reaction from citizens until the paint is on the tree. **Mr. Jones** asked if it is clearly stated what the open house is for; **Chair Boyd** responded the press release describes exactly what is being done, and each unit has a mailing list the open house notification is sent to. **Mr. Barnes** commented he thinks perhaps people get confused between what an open house and what a compartment review is; the public need to be at the open house because this is where the DNR takes comments. Notification is then sent to attend the compartment review to see the results of comments received and considered. Since the formal presentation is normally done at the beginning of the open house, around 4:00 p.m., often people are at work and miss it; suggestion was made to consider making more of an effort to notify people of what time the actual presentation would take place. **Mr. Dunn** commented he used to attend a lot of open houses and compartment reviews and experienced difficulty finding where and when they were taking place on the website. **Dr. Keathley** reported they have the same problem at MSU; he suggested coming up with a name / phrase that would better explain to the people what exactly takes place at an open house. **Mr. Dunn** stated he also felt a later start time would be beneficial for the public who would like to attend. **Chair Boyd** queried whether a weekend would be appropriate; general consensus was yes.

Mr. Roberson stated he felt a 3-week pre-notice is not enough time for the public, and maybe a consideration for the DNR would be to hold the open house prior to writing the prescription. **Ms. Boucher** agreed input up-front is needed but the DNR still has to come up with a plan as to how to do that. **Ms. Boucher** explained that over the years, the DNR has identified potential projects. Once done, a pre-review meeting takes place to get staff together, well before going on-site, to discuss issues that will be engaged there. Program and forest health staff is now involved with this process also. **Mr. Roberson** suggested having a meeting to show the public where and what we want to do, and then take their comments. **Mr. Shine** suggested adding the stand condition and what the DNR will most likely do to the stand, for the public to comment on during the pre-review process. **Mr. Roberson** added he feels responses to comments are important so the public know their comments have been looked at and taken into consideration.

Mr. Suchovsky commented that whenever FMAC talks about managing land, we should also consider landowner objectives. How we get input from the private landowners is important. Part of the problem, as he sees it, is by the time the DNR gets to the open house and compartment review it is too late for the landowners to have had their say. As he read through the State Forest Management Plan, he began to realize it is not just Forest, Mineral and Fire Management who is determining prescriptions for stands, but also 26 different agencies and multiple divisions. He has also attended many compartment reviews but unless it is in an area he has actually been in, it is difficult for him to make an informed comment. He suggested the DNR needs to look beyond just individual stands to the land surrounding the stands. **Mr. Suchovsky** went on to say the public are not showing up for the Regional Plan meetings either. He suggested having open houses and compartment reviews for work that will be happening 2 years from the time of the open house/review; consider having open houses for stands that being sold right now. **Chair Boyd** responded that would be difficult because of the work involved and having to get the contracts revised once they are signed. **Mr. Suchovsky** stated the input from citizens needs to come in before the planning stage occurs; the public needs to be able to provide their input on where they want forest management to take place. He commented that in Wisconsin he saw notices posted that prescribed burns would be taking place in a certain area, why the burn was necessary and who to contact with questions. He questioned if the FMAC should consider doing some kind of marketing study; talk with people who have attended an open house or compartment review, and find out why they attended. **Ms. Boucher** reported this has been done with some private landowners.

Mr. Suchovsky reported he has often observed foresters and wildlife staff, as well as at times fisheries staff, out in the field looking at stands way in advance to identify some of the problems and issues. **Chair Boyd** said there are regional meetings that deal with setting up management areas, and as the management areas are very detailed it would assist people to understand what the DNR has taken into consideration. **Ms. Spray** commented that people who are not foresters might feel more comfortable talking with a wildlife biologist so they don't necessarily have to talk about trees. **Chair Boyd** suggested the possibility of holding joint meetings with wildlife so the public knows it is not just about trees. [Note: Wildlife staff does attend both the open house and compartment review meetings]

Chair Boyd reported the DNR is hiring two new marketing people; interviews will be held the week of October 13 for a Forest, Mineral and Fire Management/Parks and Recreation person. The second position will be with Law Enforcement/Office of Land and Facilities. She suggested the possibility of these two new staff members being able to assist the DNR with public relations. **Dr. Keathley** felt the DNR needs to take a closer look at how they ask questions. Holding a series of meetings can make it difficult for the public to know what each meeting is for. He stated he thought a rigorous study to find out if people in general are satisfied with the work the DNR does, and if that is the reason for the low turnout at the open houses and compartment reviews. **Mr. Botti** agreed with this; he commented that if his memory recalled, years ago when the DNR began this process foresters were making an attempt to notify nearby neighbors. **Chair Boyd** responded the DNR is doing that already; each unit has a mailing list of people in the area where work is being completed. She did indicate the DNR does not currently search for titles. **Ms. Boucher** commented the DNR has looked at this, but ownership frequently changes; it is difficult to determine who the owner actually is. **Mr. Dunn** commented that if he wasn't a member of FMAC he wouldn't understand the process either.

Chair Boyd suggested having a 10 minute timeslot on the agenda of each FMAC meeting to discuss this topic. **Mr. Paulson** commented that in Montana if there was a tree that was proposed to be cut, it generated a lot of excitement. A survey was done and the national forest service received an 80% approval rate; the exception to this was motorized-use which created some dissent. He stated it is difficult to determine if something is actually wrong with the process; often people are generally satisfied.

MOTION: **Mr. Barnes** moved to adopt “process improvements” as a regular meeting agenda item; supported by **Dr. Keathley**.
Motion to add ‘process improvement’ on each FMAC Agenda passed
unanimously

WOODY BIOMASS GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

Chair Boyd stated Ms. Boucher was at the meeting to give the FMAC an update on the Woody Biomass Guidance Document (Document), and thanked all FMAC members who had been involved in the process.

Ms. Boucher reported there was one large committee with three subcommittees all reviewing the “introduction”. The subcommittees are: water quality; biodiversity; and soils. They have been working with out-of-state documents as well as DNR documents, such as the DEQ/DNR Soil and Water Quality Manual and Within Stand Retention Guidelines. Decision was made to take the document into pieces and work with it that way, rather than bringing in other groups to assist.

Ms. Boucher provided a draft document for the FMAC to get an idea of what the Document might look like (attached). Discussion ensued.

The Soil and Water Quality Manual now covers transition zones for wildlife habitat, how to plan for activities and impacts on hydrology, which was not in the original Document. The definition of Woody Biomass has yet to be resolved. Two of the subcommittees discussed the definition of Biomass and Woody Biomass, and decided to include sustainability in the definition.

Ms. Boucher stated she is expecting to need a face-to-face meeting before the end of the year. The general guidance Draft is a result of three separate comment meetings. One of the comments made was to include a section on vernal ponds, which has been done.

Mr. Botti questioned the differences between Mr. Suchovsky preferring short-rotation and Mr. Roberson preferring long-rotation. **Mr. Barnes** commented the guidelines are written for general forestry practice taking place today; there are not companies out there mining for Woody Biomass since there would have to be a sustainable forest to do that. He doesn't see that method as being viable. He continued that the differences in their objectives are just short-rotation versus long-rotation. **Mr. Roberson** stated it should be up to the landowner if they want to use underground wood. **Dr. Keathley** commented the DNR is not confident that we can tear up roots, etc. and still maintain a sustainable management system. **Mr. Suchovsky** said part of the value of guidelines is the ability to recognize different types of stands to be considered and being able to refer to the different guidelines per stand type.

Chair Boyd stated there are more meetings that will be held and thanked everyone involved for their participation. The intention is to have the draft completed by the end of December, but if landowner objectives will be added in, it may be later than that. Intent to get cleaned up and back to sub groups, then talk about it again.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chair Boyd stated according to the bylaws the FMAC will hold an election of officers every other year. At the first meeting of the FMAC in 2009 election of officers will be on the agenda. She continued the DNR will still be support for the Committee and she will continue to serve, but feels the FMAC will be better served with a non-DNR member as Chair. She requested the Committee members consider their willingness to serve in that capacity. The new Chair would be responsible for running the meetings and reporting to government bodies that require it.

Mr. Roberson brought up the removal of members with attendance issues; he requested sending out notices to those members who are close to the absentee rules according to the bylaws.

All Committee members agreed to hold election of officers at the first meeting in 2009.

FIELD TRIP OPPORTUNITIES

Chair Boyd requested FMAC member to think about ideas for field trips in spring 2009. Some ideas were:

Legal ORV scramble area in Grayling district; problem is it is adjacent to a legal trail but riders are going everywhere. Discussion was held as to if this area can be restored or if the DNR can look at opportunities into making it a managed scramble area.

Visit to the 4-mile fire area

History trip in Grayling area, specifically in the Higgins Lake area

Visit Roscommon area again; oak issues, way oak gets listed in sales, etc.

Visit Shawn Hagan's area where they are working on biomass

Visit a Warbler area

Chair Boyd suggested beginning in the Grayling area in the spring.

TENTATIVE FMAC 2009 MEETING DATES

February 18; April 15; June 17; August 19; October 21; December 16

A draft calendar will be sent to Committee members, with a vote to occur at the December 3 FMAC meeting.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Chair Boyd directed the FMAC members to the handout included in their meeting packet.

Question regarding House Bill 6402. **Chair Boyd** stated she will send the DNR analysis of that bill to the Committee members.

Chair Boyd referred to the budget handout included in the Committee packet. This is the information presented to the DNR management team each week. These budget sheets will be included in future Committee meetings; it shows what the Executive branch is asking for, and

give the FMAC a chance to give their opinions and ask questions. The 2010 budget will be worked on beginning in February.

Mr. Dunn brought up 2008 Public Acts 240 and 241, giving counties the right to open county roads to ORV use. In Luce County there is a group that distributes handouts and works with the Sheriff department regarding damaged areas. Some have been camping out and trying to educate the public and working on getting ORV riders to stop. This program has been very successful. He stated getting community groups together to police themselves is beneficial. **Chair Boyd** commented with the county roads being open to ORV use, there is currently no way to track accidents which is a very important key to getting the law changed. The DNR is working on a database to track accidents so the state and counties can be better informed of the ramifications of opening county roads to ORV use. The DNR did not support ORV county road use because it is very difficult for riders to tell the difference between forest roads and county roads and the potential for increase in resource damage.

AGENDA ITEMS/NEXT MEETING DATE:

Agenda Items:

Improving Public Process

Adoption of 2009 Meeting Schedule

Budget Information; total DNR summary sheet that goes to Natural Resources Commission

Process Improvements

2010 Budget Proposal – discussion, questions

Regeneration Update

Cedar Regeneration

Deer Management Planning Process (Spray)

Next Meeting:

December 3, 2008

MUCC, 2101 Wood Street

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: **Mr. Schuvosky** moved to adjourn the meeting for the Forest Management Advisory Committee; supported by **Mr. Dunn**
Motion to adjourn passed unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 3:12 p.m.